

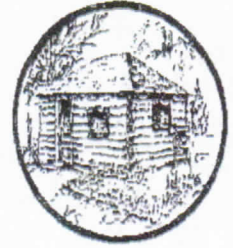


UTE PASS HISTORICAL SOCIETY & Pikes Peak Museum

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Mama's Christmas Thoughts by Irene Gayler Tanberg

Each year at Christmastime, one of my special joys is being invited to share in the opening of gifts with my grandchildren. Stacks of gaily wrapped packages are opened to the accompaniment of shrieks of joy, and soon everyone is enveloped in mounds of torn paper, ribbons and hastily opened boxes. Gifts are cast aside as more interesting ones come to view, a scene that I am sure is duplicated in countless homes.

My mind travels back over the years to another Christmas, 1913 to be exact, the year of the "big snow". Old timers still shake their heads at the memory of that snow, a once in a century type of snow, one of nature's weird jokes that is devastating to man and beast.

My brother and I were five and three years old, children of two young people barely out of their teens, who had left their flatland home in Kansas to brave the wilds of Colorado and establish a homestead in the mountains some nine thousand feet above sea level.

All had gone well that year. A fine crop of potatoes was in the cellar dug into the mountainside, a young beef had been butchered and divided among the neighbors, a "milch" cow stood in the barn alongside a team of horses, and cut wood was stacked high in the yard, so my young father felt quite secure.

And then came the snow! Six feet on the level and the drifts were mountainous.

Now a snowstorm is of no concern whatsoever to two small children. They would carefully hang their stockings by the stove on Christmas Eve, and Santa Claus would drive his reindeer over the snow and fill them. But what consternation it must have brought to the hearts of their parents!

Communication was at a standstill. It was long before telephones were commonplace, and horses, which were the only means of transportation, couldn't possibly breast the towering drifts. But-there must be a way! My father had been raised on a farm in eastern Kansas, but somewhere he had read that in foreign countries people learned to walk on the top of the snow on long pieces of wood called "skis", so he made up his mind that skis were the answer to his dilemma.



From Left: Jack Gayler, Miss Blair (schoolteacher), Irene Gayler, G.G. Gayler (father), Madge Mitts, Stella Gayler (mother)

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It was a matter of trial and error, but eventually he evolved a workable pair of skis. Exploratory trips to some of their young neighbors found others working out their problems and they pooled their knowledge. They scraped and oiled the boards, hardened the tips in the fire and then dipped them in water, leaned them against the wall with pressure against the tips so they would curve up on the ends. Straps were nailed to the edges to form loops in which to place the toes and a block of wood was the heel piece.

Our homestead was on a large plateau of rolling hills—we were about eight miles from the edge. Down in the valley was the railway that led to the nucleus of a tiny village [Woodland Park]. A boarding house, a blacksmith and a barbershop made up the rest of the town.

And now it was the day of Christmas Eve. Early morning found my father and a neighbor on their clumsy skis laboring across the countryside to make the downhill run and then another five miles across country to the town.

Only the stars in two pairs of eyes could ever pay for such a grueling trip that lasted far into the night. But Christmas morning was a time of great joy when a little girl with trembling hands pulled a small China doll out of her stocking, followed by a piece of red calico for a new dress, an orange and some Christmas candy. A little boy laughed happily at two small iron horses (he still has them), a pair of overalls, and also an orange and candy.

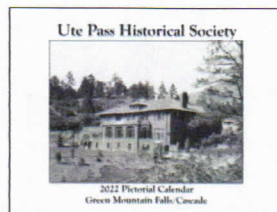
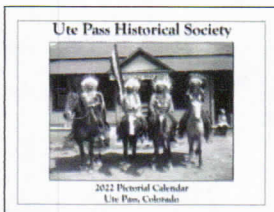
My heart is filled with gratitude for all the good things that come to my loved ones. I rejoice at the abundance of lovely gifts and I would not change a single box or paper or ribbon. Indeed, my cup runneth over. But sometimes I think of that little girl and boy so long ago. And how brave were that mother and father.



Irene Tanberg (1907-2002) was the daughter of G.G. Gayler who homesteaded on Bald Mountain in 1906.

**Available ONLY at the
UPHS Gift Shop**

**\$14 +
tax**



2022 14-month pictorial calendar
Ute Pass or Green Mountain Falls edition

UPHS Gift Shop hours are 10 to noon Wednesdays, and 11 to 3, Thursdays through Saturdays.

We offer a great selection of books, cards, Indian art, gifts, jewelry, and many cookbooks. We also have over 4,000 photos, most of which are available for reprinting.

Give us a call (719.686.7512) to reserve a day and time for a free guided tour of History Park.

President's Corner, 2022



I would like to wish everyone a healthy and happy New Year. What a year we have had, getting through the Covid Pandemic! Hopefully, this will all be behind us before too long.

Thanks to our generous patrons, the Historical Society was able to get through this year in good shape financially. In addition, our Gift Shop sales were great, with the help of Gift Shop Manager,

Judy Perkins, who spent weekends in the summer at the Land Office in Green Mountain Falls, where she sold Gift Shop items, and met hundreds of people.

Our treasurer, Jon Woods has retired this year and we have a new Treasurer, Mike Lockwood, who retired as treasurer for the Aurora Historical Society. He and his wife, Kathryn, have recently relocated to Woodland Park, and are a welcome asset to UPHS.

We are continuing to work on the Dude Ranch film, with the help of Dennis Zerull. Local photographer Charlie Chambers is also involved in the film.

We are in the process of doing a short film about the agricultural history of Divide, in place of the Potato Soup Supper, which has been cancelled the last two Octobers. Hopefully, it will keep your interest in the history of agriculture in the Ute Pass area until our next harvest celebration...2023?

Due to the Pandemic, we will not be doing the Annual Patron's event in 2022. Hopefully, we can reschedule for January 2023.

The triennial Marigreen Pines Tour has been rescheduled for July 16th and 17th, 2022. If we are unable to have the Tour this year due to Covid, it will be rescheduled for 2023. Keep an eye on our website, newsletters, facebook and emails for updates.

Have a Happy and Healthy New Year!

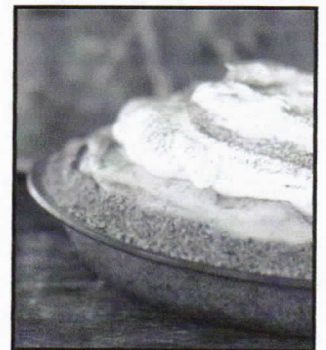
Donna Finicle

Donna Finicle, President

No-Bake Eggnog Pie

- 1 3.4 oz. package of vanilla instant pudding**
- 1-3/4 cups cold eggnog**
- 1 cup frozen whipped topping, thawed**
- 1 graham cracker pie crust**

Nutmeg and additional whipped topping optional!



- 1) In a large mixing bowl, beat pudding mix with eggnog for two minutes. The pudding mixture should thicken slightly. Gently fold in one cup whipped topping until just combined. Spoon mixture into pie crust.**
- 2) Refrigerate at least four hours.**
- 3) To serve, place a dollop of whipped topping and a sprinkle of nutmeg on each serving.**

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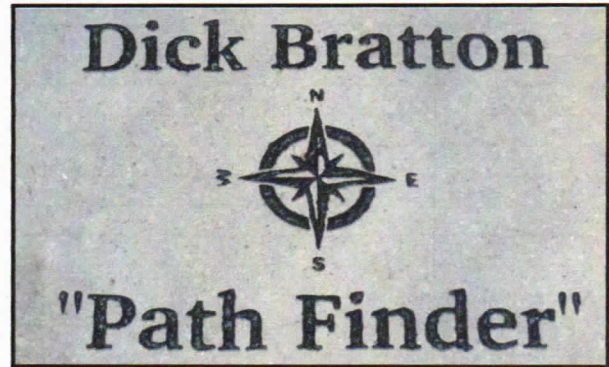
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Stone added to the Memorial Garden in History Park, remembering the late Richard Bratton of Green Mountain Falls



Annual wreath-making get together adds a festive feel of the season to History Park

Special thanks to our Historical Club Patrons

Alexander H. Paul
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Funding for these grants has been provided by Colorado Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan (SHARP) initiative.



Ute Pass Historical Society
& Pikes Peak Museum
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THANK YOU!

*The Ute Pass Historical Society's Board of Directors is grateful to our loyal patrons and enthusiastic volunteers. Without your generous financial contributions and dedicated volunteer service, we would not exist. Thanks to all of you for supporting our mission to preserve and share the history of the families and communities of the Ute Pass area of Colorado.
It is an honor to serve you!*